

Message Text

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER OF EDUCATION

REF: ROME 11013

1. SUMMARY: THE AMBASSADOR'S JULY 5 PROTOCOL CALL ON MINISTER OF EDUCATION Malfatti provided occasion for highly positive conversation regarding activities in the cultural field. The Ambassador undertook to outline the Carter Administration's emphasis on cultural and scientific affairs. The Minister was notably receptive, and enthusiastically agreed that the advanced nations of the free world must work together to let creativity and good will solve the problems they face. Specific action programs were discussed. Minister accepted Ambassador's invitation to meet again, with several of top staff of Embassy and Ministry, in September, to lay more concrete plans

END SUMMARY.

2. ITEMS DISCUSSED INCLUDED:

- A. GOI BAN ON FOREIGN STUDENTS FOR NEXT TWO YEARS (SEE REFTEL).
- B. INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROJECT FOR REGIONAL RESEARCH DIRECTORS:

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THIS YEAR, THE MINISTRY EXPECTS TO ESTABLISH AN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN EACH REGION. THIS FIRST ORGANIZED RESEARCH EFFORT IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION COULD PROVIDE DECISION-MAKERS OF THE FUTURE WITH FACTS PRESENTLY BADLY LACKING. THE MINISTER INDICATED THIS CONTINUING INTEREST IN HAVING THESE PEOPLE, AS SOON AS THEY ARE APPOINTED, VISIT THE UNITED STATES FOR A SERIOUS STUDY TOUR. FINANCING COULD BE SPLIT THREE WAYS: THE MINISTRY, THE REGIONS,

AND THE EMBASSY IVP.

C. GOI SUPPORT FOR JOHNS HOPKINS BOLOGNA CENTER: THE MINISTER SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT SUPPORT AT THE LEVEL REQUESTED (100 MILLION LIRE ANNUALLY -- DOUBLE THE PREVIOUS FIGURE) WOULD BE VOTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARLIAMENT BY NEXT OCTOBER. IT WAS AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR THE BOLOGNA CENTER TO EVOLVE INCREASINGLY TOWARDS HELPING TO SERVE ITALIAN NEEDS.

D. THE AMBASSADOR OUTLINED A PRELIMINARY PLAN WHEREBY THE PRIVATE SECTOR -- PERHAPS A CONSORTIUM OF BANKING INTERESTS -- WOULD PROVIDE A FLOATING FUND FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, WHICH COULD PROVIDE LOW-INTEREST LOANS TO BOTH ITALIAN AND AMERICAN STUDENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF OVERSEAS STUDY. THIS CONCEPT MET WITH ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER, AND IT WAS AGREED THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS SHOULD PURSUE RESEARCH INTO THIS FILED.

E. ENGLISH TEACHING: THE MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGED THE SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN THE ITALIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, WHICH RESULTED IN ALL TOO FEW ITALIANS EVEN IN TOP LEVELS CAPABLY HANDLING THE LANGUAGE. HE NOTED THE PROBLEM WAS A MASSIVE ONE, AND THT THERE WAS A SERIOUS LACK OF FUNDS AND OF TRAINED PERSONNEL. BUT IT WAS AGREED THAT ACTION NEEDED TO BE TAKEN, AND THAT AMERICAN EXPERTISE WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. THE MINISTER SUGGESTED A "HIGH-LEVEL" MEETING IN THE FALL OF AMERICAN AND ITALIAN EXPERTS TO DETERMINE PRECISE COURSES OF ACTION.
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F. UNEMPLOYED YOUTH: THE MINISTER SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUNGER PEOPLE, NOTING IN PASSING THE FREQUENT CASES OF OVER-EDUCATION FOR THE JOBS AVAILABLE, AND THE NEED FOR SOME KIND OF COORDINATED POLICIES IN THIS FIELD AMONG THE COMMON MARKET NATIONS. HE NOTED THAT ALL ADVANCED COUNTRIES HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN THIS FIELD, AND THAT ONE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE TO HIS PARTY IN PROMOTING ADDITIONAL EXCHANGES WITH OTHER NATIONS IS TO HAVE POTENTIAL CRITICS AT HOME REALIZE THAT THE DEFICIENCIES ARE NOT UNIQUELY ITALIAN.

MALFATTI SUGGESTED THAT A MAJOR SEMINAR ON THIS PROBLEM, FEATURING PRIMARY EXPERTS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES PERHAPS IN THE FALL, COULD PROVIDE ENLIGHTENMENT AND SUGGEST AVENUES FOR PROGRAMS. THE AMBASSADOR
OFFERED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS PRESIDENT, JAMES PERKINS, WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE FUTURE ASSOCIATION.

G. FINALLY, IT WAS AGREED THAT FOLLOWING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THESE POINTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANDREOTTI VISIT TO WASHINGTON, BOTH THE MINISTER AND THE AMBASSADOR AND THEIR TOP AIDES IN THESE

FIELDS BY SEPTEMBER WOULD BE PREPARED TO SPEND AN EVENING
TOGETHER TO DISCUSS SPECIFICS OF FUTURE ACTION.
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